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Secretary of State

Essentials of Records Control Schedule Development

RI Department of State | State Archives & Public Records Administration

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ABOUT US

The Rhode Island State Archives and Public Records Administration is part of the Division of Archives, Library, and Public Information within the Office of the Secretary of State. We are responsible for the following:

- The State Archives preserves and makes available for research Rhode Island's historical public records from 1638 to the present.
- The Public Records Administration provides records management assistance and storage services to state agencies.
- We also provide advice on records management to Local Government.

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THIS PRESENTATION

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1. Background
2. Outcomes
3. What is a Records Control Schedule?
4. Building a Schedule
5. Storage and Retrieval
6. Review

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IS IT A PUBLIC RECORD?

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The crucial factor in deciding whether a document is a public record depends on its function and contents, not the physical means used to create, send, and keep the document (Reference: R.I. Gen. Laws § 38-1-1.1).

Questions to ask yourself:

1. Do the contents concern public business?
2. Does it serve a public function?
3. Whose office is it from?

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WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

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Agencies bear responsibility for the establishment of records management programs and for the proper management of their records
(Reference R.I. Gen. Laws § § 38-3-7 and 42-8.1-17).

This means that as an agency you are responsible for:

1. Creating records that are complete enough to document all legally mandated activities; and
2. Maintaining records of policies, decisions, and transactions.

OUTCOMES OF POOR RECORDS MANAGEMENT

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1. An inability to properly perform the core mission
2. An inability to resume operations after a disaster
3. Legal penalties for failure to find and produce records
4. Public distrust due to inability to produce controversial or requested records
5. Costs for remediation of damaged records that have not yet met retention

WHY A RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULE?

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Records Control Schedules assist in the maintenance and preservation of records and drive the records management process.

Utilizing a Records Control Schedule offers:

1. Economical Storage
2. Fast Retrieval
3. Timely Disposition
4. Accountability
   a. No record destroyed before, or kept, after its time

WHAT DOES A RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULE DO?

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Records Control Schedules tell you the what, how, and when of records management.

Just Remember:

1. Know when to hold “em”
2. Know when to stow “em”
3. Know when to throw “em”

TWO TYPES OF RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULES

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General Schedules

1. Executive, High-Level, and Policy Making
2. Legal
3. Safety and Security
4. Facilities
5. Daily Operations
6. Records Management
7. Information Management
8. Fiscal
9. Personnel

Agency Specific

1. One per Agency
2. Lists and describes the records that are unique
3. Identifies records created or received in the course of conducting business

All schedules available at:
https://www.sos.ri.gov/divisions/frequent-filers/records-management

BUILDING A RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULE

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Records Control Schedules have three main components:

1. Record series number and title
2. Description of record series
3. Retention period

NOTE: Record series can be divided into sub-series.

BUILDING A RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULE

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Records Inventory to define Record Series

a. Collect data on files created and received
b. Describe files and their purpose

Types of Files	Series Description – Function & Typical Documents	Retention Period
A numbered list titling files the Agency keeps to conduct business.	Description of Agency functions that create the records and documents typically placed and kept in each of these kinds of files.	The amount of time these files need to be kept.

BUILDING A RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULE – RESULTS

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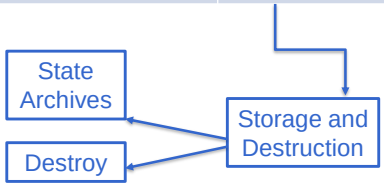
Titles = Record Series

Functions = Descriptions

List of Titles [Record Series]	Description	Retention [Number of Years]
Series 1 – Inspection Reports	a. Function b. Included record types	a. Years b. Triggered after event



STORING YOUR RECORDS

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Transmittal Form:

a. Record Series Title
b. Sub-Unit (If Applicable)
c. Two-Digit Year
d. Sequence
e. Agency Box Number
f. Record Series Number Destruction Date

Reference your Records Control Schedule for series and retention information.

Cover Sheet:

a. Agency
b. Form Completed By
c. Date of Completion
d. Address
e. Telephone
f. Record Series Description
g. Dates
h. Number of Boxes
i. Barcode Range

Forms are available from the Public Records Administration in both legal and portrait size.

STORAGE – OFFSITE (For State Agencies)

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Complete Transmittal Form in Microsoft Word → Send DRAFT Transmittal to Public Records Administration (PRA) → Transmittal is reviewed and processed by PRA → PRA schedules pick-up and delivery for Agency

STORING YOUR RECORDS (FOR STATE AGENCIES)

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Do:

a. Folder records, label folders and boxes according to your Records Control Schedule
b. Use standard sized records boxes

Do not:

a. Use large bankers boxes (2.4 cu. ft.) OR odd boxes OR
b. Store unidentified files

Rules of thumb:

a. Can you lift it?
b. Pack like with like.

RETRIEVING YOUR RECORDS (FOR STATE AGENCIES)

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Provide:

- Barcodes
- Name or number of the specific file

Delivery:

- Typically 1-2 Days

Contact the Public Records Administration (PRA):

- Telephone – 401.222.2353
- Fax – 401.222.3199
- Email – records@sos.ri.gov

DESTRUCTION

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1. **Requires Approved Records Control Schedule.**
2. **Records Control Schedules require approval before Agencies can utilize them for destruction. Approval by the:**
   a. Agency Head
   b. State Archivist
   c. Attorney General
   d. Auditor General
3. **Requires filing of the Certificate of Records Destruction (CRD).**
   1. Off-Site Destruction
   2. On-site Destruction

CERTIFICATE OF RECORDS DESTRUCTION

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1. Certificate of Records Destruction (CRD) Submitted
2. CRD is approved and signed by State Archivist and a designated Agency representative
3. CRD is returned to the Agency and destruction is carried out appropriately.

IN REVIEW

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Records Control Schedules:

- Describe the function and life cycle of Agency created records
- Provide standards for length of document preservation
- Assist in the description of records in the custody and control of your Agency when filing and storing

RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULE → EFFECTIVE RECORDS MANAGEMENT → COMPLIANCE WITH RI LAWS

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Questions?

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